

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the
C H U R C H

O F
GREENWICH in KENT,
On WEDNESDAY the 29th of *May*, 1754,

Before the Laudable Association of
ANTIGALLICANS,
Established at *GREENWICH*.

Sed cum omnia ratione, animoque lustraveris, omnium societatum nulla est gravior, nulla charior, quam ea, quæ cum republicâ est unicuique nostrum. Chari sunt parentes, chari liberi, propinqui, familiares: sed omnes omnium charitates patria una complexa est: pro quâ quis bonus dubitet mortem appetere, si ei sit profuturus?

Cic. de Offic. lib. I. cap. 17.

By *JOHN BUTLER*,
Late Student of *Christ-Church*.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for M. COOPER, in *Pater-noster-row*.

WILLIAM

OF THE

OF THE

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TO THE
P R E S I D E N T,
The past P R E S I D E N T S,
A N D O T H E R S,
The Officers and Brethren
Of the Laudable Affociation of

A N T I G A L L I C A N S,
Eftablifhed at *Greenwich*;

THIS DISCOURSE,
(Delivered and Published at their
Request)

Is addreffed,
With all due Refpect,
By their moft fincere Friend,
And affectionate Brother,

Greenwich, June
11, 1754.

JOHN BUTLEY.

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JOHN BUTLER

2 MACCABEES, iv. 45.

Seeking the good of all, both publick and private.

THE person, whom these words relate to, is the good ONIAS. The Jewish nation had been for a long time sorely oppressed by the Gentiles round about; infomuch that the sacred historian acquaints us, that their liberties had been invaded, their privileges taken away, their treasuries robbed, and their holy places prophaned. Nor was it of violence only and force that they complained; their distresses are ascribed also to a more secret and subtle cause. Their minds were no less corrupted than their persons oppressed. The introduction

duction of foreign customs had alienated their affections from every thing that was native and peculiar to them: The Many, in contempt of the Divine prohibitions, mingled among the heathen, and learned their works; and forgetful of their duty, and regardless of their interests, suffered themselves to be seduced into apostacy, and the commission of the most enormous impieties. Now this was a disorder of a more dangerous, because of an insinuating nature; and by having made an interest with the passions, it was the less likely to be corrected. It was infectious; and therefore not easily to be escaped: it vitiated the inclinations; and therefore became a favourite: The patient grew fond of his disease, and relished the poison: And, when fed and strengthened and inveterated by indulgence, the malady prevented all application, and excluded every remedy. Such was the height of * *Greek* fashions, (as it is

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* That the Grecians stood in no great degree of esteem for sincerity, solidity, &c. we have, besides the evidence of sacred, the
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expressed in a few verses below the text) *Such was the height of Greek fashions, and increase of heathenish manners, that they despised the temple and neglected the sacrifices; not setting by the honours of their fathers, but liking the glory of the Grecians best of all.*

Amidst

concurring testimony also of many prophane, writings. The poet describes them,

Adulandi gens prudentissima.

Juv. Sat. 3, 86.

And again,

—— *Græcia mendax.*

Sat. 10. 174.

The character the Roman orator has left us of that people, is this;
Græci sunt fallaces et leves et diuturnâ servitute ad nimiam assentationem eruditi. Cic. ad Q. Fratrem, lib. 1. epist. 1.

And how indignant is the declaration,

*Non possum ferre, Quirites,
Græcam urbem!*

Where Rome is, in contempt, called a city of Greece, on account of the many Grecian customs, that abounded in, and corrupted it.

Nay, the honest *Marius* goes so far as to pride himself in being unacquainted even with their language.

Neque literas Græcas didici. parum placebat eas discere, quippe quæ ad virtutem doctoribus nihil profuerunt.

SAL. Bell. Jug.

Nor do the Roman ladies seem to have been entirely clear from the charge of affectation.

*Nam quid rancidius quam quod se non putat uila
Formosam, nisi quæ de Tuscâ, Græcula facta est,
De Sulmonensi mera Cecropis? Omnia Græcè, &c.*

I shall only add (for the information of the English reader) a remark of the learned and elegant translator of CICERO's orations.

“ The Romans had much the same opinion of the Greeks, as we have of a neighbouring nation; that they were volatile, slight and inconstant, and that these defects led them into treachery and perfidiousness.”

Amidst this degeneracy of the *Jews*, and the mean desertion of their customs, both civil and religious, stood up the good ONIAS, bewailed the abandoned state and miseries of his country, and in many and unwearied instances, asserted the publick good. His character in one place is, that *He was holy and an hater of wickedness*; in another, that *He deserved well of the city, and tendred his own nation, and was zealous of the laws*; and, in the text, that *He sought the good of all, both publick and private*.

I forbear enlarging upon his history, or enumerating the several instances of his zeal; as I intend not to vex the meaning of those passages, nor strain the particulars of them to my purpose. It will suffice, that the words I have made choice of for my text convey to us somewhat more than the character of the *Jewish* patriot: It will suffice, that they are equally applicable to you, My Brethren, and are fully expressive of the end and aim of your order; *Seeking the good of all, both publick and private*. Suffer

Suffer me, then, from the general scope of these words to treat here of a subject, you are already well acquainted with, Publick Spirit : Which will occasionally lead me to speak of it, as it discovers itself in your principles and profession. Indeed the amiable pattern of the text made, we are told, the private as well as publick welfare the objects of his care: But yet I chuse to confine this discourse to the latter; both because it more immediately relates to the occasion of this meeting, and because all particular is ever more or less involved in the general good.

The prosperity of the body politic ought no less to engage our attention, than the health of the natural: And we cannot but think it our duty to endeavour after the honour and advantage of the community; unless we contract our thoughts to the narrow sphere of our particular beings, and forget that we are members of society.

By publick spirit I understand that passion of the soul, which prompts us to promote the

good of society, exclusive of, and superior to, every private consideration. It must have society, and not individuals, for its object; or the passion is no more than friendship: And it must rise superior to private consideration; as its very essence consists in the distinction.

It is an happy accident, I allow, that private benefit consequentially attends, and is in general the reward of, publick zeal. The regard we extend to others returns back to us with interest: And the honour and wealth of a community naturally reflect credit and power upon its constituents. And it is allowed also, that particular and general advantages are so blended and interwoven, as scarce to be separated; that it is difficult to nourish the root, and at the same time not convey succour to the branches; but yet (in order to form a clear notion of the virtue we are contending for) it is necessary to be distinguished, that unless the passion for the publick be our superior principle of action; profess we what we please, self-interest will betray

betray itself to be the spring that moves us, and vain and affected will be all pretensions to publick spirit.

Now this view discovers to us a virtue, that is the most generous and enlarged in the human breast, and an high improvement upon nature. It is generous ; as it prefers social to self : It is enlarged ; as it expresses the love of mankind in general, and of our respective countries in particular : And it is an improvement upon mere nature ; as *she* principally and constantly recommends to us very little more than the pursuit of private emolument.

It is this virtue that has immortalized the names of so many of the antients : And their usefulness, while living, to the publick, has handed down their memories with advantage to succeeding ages. By ingenuity and wisdom and valour ; by the founding of states, and the instituting of laws, and the invention and improvement of arts, they severally became serviceable to their respective bodies : And,

appearing to the generality of men somewhat more than mortal, at their deaths they were accordingly lamented and adored. Nay, it is no difficult matter to shew that their very Gods themselves (pardon the *Pagan* expression!) owed their divinity only to their benefiting the world. The introduction, for instance, of agriculture, civility and government, was merit certainly sufficient to advance their *Jupiter* to a supremacy over their deities. Again; their *Neptune* would have been unnoticed, had he not struck out the art of navigation: And but for the invention of, and his excellence in, the sciences of poetry and musick, we had never heard of their *Apollo*. A loom it was that distinguished a *Minerva*: And arts and merchandize a *Mercury*. In short, towards the constituting an hero, there went only this previously necessary requisite, the deserving well of mankind. Innumerable proofs are to be brought to this purpose; and we might trace this truth in the lives and actions of all the favourites

favourites of fame: But such an enquiry would ask a volume rather than a sermon, and carry me far beyond the limits of my time.

Neither would I insult a Christian audience with examples drawn only from prophane writings; especially when the sacred history abounds with instances to the same effect, and gives us those shining characters of a *Moses*, a *Joshua*, a *Jephtha*, a *Gideon*, a *Judas Maccabeus*, and the rest of the worthies in holy writ.

It may perhaps be objected, that the very words of my text are a confutation of the doctrine I am here to advance: It may be replied against me, that it was the ennobled character of *Onias*, that he sought the publick and private good of *All*. A term this most universal, and comprehensive of the whole of the human species! But, where is the individual, whose power and opportunity and capacity are enlarged enough, and adequate to the task? And can we rise into merit but upon these

these too general and almost infinite conditions? Is the duty imaginary then and impracticable? If not, under what accommodations are we to understand it?

The lives of all the renowned among the sons of men will instruct us, that the most extensively-publick aims have yet their boundaries; and all the generous attempts and labours that have been ever made and undergone, received their worth and utility only from their confinement within proper spheres, and their direction to certain objects. Created powers must have their limits; beyond which whenever we extend them, like a too-finely-attenuated thread, they necessarily weaken and become of little service. The *Jewish* patriot fought, it is true, the good of *All*; but then it was the good of only *that all*, with whom he stood more immediately connected; as an inhabitant together with them of the same country, as a member of the same state, and a professor of the same faith. His virtue was indebted for its lustre

to the contraction of its rays: His cares were glorious, because they were national: and his distinction arose merely from his zeal for his people's happiness; when he saw it either undermined by the artifice, or assaulted by the power, of the nations round about them. When such are our motives, and this the mark we aim at, most assuredly the exertion of this spirit is justifiable, is generous, is laudable. The security of property and person is a duty most consonant to reason: neither does religion overthrow nature, whose first principle is to preserve herself. In short, as it is absurd to suppose any virtues propounded to our practice, that are either above or beyond our power; so it is that species only of publick spirit, we term patriotism, which lies level with our abilities, and is the virtue I would now recommend.

To illustrate this subject farther, I might, if need were, call in foreign assistance, and appeal to the annals of almost every age and people. I might recount a large variety of
memo-

memorable actions ; and inspire you with the fame of men, who have hazarded their lives for their brethren ; and have fallen the willing victims to their country's welfare. But your own acquaintance with history will furnish you with a sufficient number of these eminent examples. You will easily call to mind the *Decii* and the *Scipio's* of antiquity : you will immediately recollect, among many others, a *Spartan Leonidas*, an *Athenian Codrus*, and a *Roman Curtius*. Instances these, each of which singly will evince that public spirit is a virtue not merely chimerical ; not a notion floating only in the brain ; but a real, active, and practical principle. If then, at the instigation of false oracles, others have done so much ; under the influence of a true religion, shall we hesitate to do even less ? Are there those who consulted the common good at the expence of life ; and shall we not promote it, under the additional encouragement too of private benefit ? If they could devote and sacrifice themselves for the safety or honour

nour of their states; are we so very mean and abject as ungenerously to neglect the interest of our's, or basely to betray it? But reproaches and complaints are impertinent to the occasion of this meeting; and of you, My Brethren, I am persuaded far better things.

Amidst a people too negligent of their own advantages, and only fond of, and affecting every thing that is alien, you, like the good *Onias*, have ventured most unfashionably to oppose and correct the infection of our *modern Greeks*. And I can so far congratulate you upon the success of your cause, as it has in so few years received so great an increase of its professors; and they are now become so considerable a body; considerable in every sense of the word; in number, in property, in honour.

The expediency of your design is self-evident: And policy but recommends what nature at first suggested. This kingdom was formed to stand forth alone, and be distinguished from the nations: And its separation from the continent points out and advises a

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The expediency of your design is self-evident: And policy but recommends what nature at first suggested. This kingdom was formed to stand forth alone, and be distinguished from the nations: And its separation from the continent points out and advises a

disjunction also from their manners. Nothing can justify the too eager pursuit of foreign advantages, but the want of natural : And for *Us* immoderately to affect the products, to copy the customs, and espouse the maxims of others, is an argument of our deficiency either in judgment or gratitude ; certainly supposes us not fully apprized of, or not duly influenced by the various blessings providence has poured out upon us, natural, political, and religious. The privileges peculiar to this island are not only equal, but in many respects superior, to those of every other kingdom. For which way soever we turn our thoughts, whether upon the convenience of our particular situation and climate, whether upon the happy temperament of our civil constitution, or upon the purity and refinement of our ecclesiastical establishment ; if we consider ourselves as subjects of the state, or members of the church, with an eye to our temporal or spiritual concerns ; in every respect, our advantages appear so high and valuable, that we can never be too thank-

thankful in the enjoyment of, nor too jealous of every encroachment upon them. And for the confirmation of the excellency of our peculiar privileges, I need but appeal to those who, from among the nations, foregoing their native prejudices, pay us the compliment of their residence among us; and willingly exchange a land of tyranny, bigotry, and superstition, for security of property, and liberty of conscience.

I am not insensible, that in the opinion of some the ANTIGALLICAN principles are open to one objection, and seem liable to the charge of uncharitableness. But I must beg leave to pronounce, that they, who are capable of making the objection, have a very mistaken notion both of the principles themselves, as they have also of the nature of christian charity: Which sublime duty they would force to mean, what reason denies, and religion does not countenance. Does religion require that I should overlook and neglect my neighbours and my countrymen, only for the sake of those who are removed and unknown? Or what precept is there in the Gospel, that

obliges me to study the benefit of a stranger to the prejudice of my friend? Christianity, it may be, enjoins us to love our enemies ; but to love our neighbours as ourselves. Can we shew our reconciliation to our former foes, by nothing but sacrificing to them our interests? And may we not be merciful, without laying ourselves at their mercy? Such wretched weakness may proceed, I will allow, from the innocence of the dove, but can have very little of the wisdom of the serpent.

Let us then not only not admit but dis- countenance all those foreign instruments that administer to luxury and voluptuousness ; and like unfaithful friends, both tempt and betray us into ruin. We are at peace, it is true, with the power ; but it would be well for us if we were at war with the manners of *France* : It is to be lamented, that we have follies enough of our own growth ; and to be wished that we would not add to them by the importation of *Exotics*.

But especially let me remind you that there is a duty, without the performance of which
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all your zeal, My Brethren, will yet be vain, and your endeavours ineffectual. For the best policy is to be sincerely good ; and the community can receive benefit only in the integrity of its members.

It seems to be the mark of the present age, that its vices are general and unmonopolized ; common to each sex*, and every condition : And I need not, I believe, undertake to prove, that luxury, intemperance, vanity and the like, tend immediately and in their own natural consequences, to the weakening and dissolving the body, both natural and politic. Much less need I recite the several threatnings in scripture denounced against national iniquities and transgressions.

And how, in reason, can the infidel, or the sensualist, or the covetous, be ever truly serviceable to their country ? Private vices corrupt and contaminate the publick : and the man, who never looks beyond himself, or consults
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* Sæpe me querentem de fæminarum, sæpe de virorum, nec de privatorum modo sed etiam magistratuum sumptibus, audistis : diversisq; duobus viciis avaritia et luxuria civitatem laborare, quæ pestes omnia magna imperia everterunt.

any farther than the gratification of his own appetites, is incapable of doing any thing that is publick-spirited and noble: He merits not the protection of government; and is an alien unto his mother's children. While the * wishes of the generous, are only ' that he may leave
' his country in the enjoyment of her liberty,
' and that the reward of every man be pro-
' portioned to what he has deserved of the
' community !'

Besides this — God ever deals with states and kingdoms, agreeably to the virtues or vices of their constituents: and their prosperity, as a collective body, depends upon their moral conduct. Of this the *Jewish* nation is a striking instance. God singled them out from all the kingdoms of the earth, fenced them in with laws and customs peculiar to themselves, and upon their conformity to, and observance of them, promised them every blessing. But yet if they forsook the paths of virtue, and disregarded his commands, the same divine

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* Duo modo hæc opto: unum ut moriens populum Rom. liberum relinquam: hoc mihi majus à Diis immortalibus dari nihil potest: alterum ut ità cuique eveniat, ut de republicâ quisque mereatur !

legislator threaten'd (and has performed what he threaten'd) to abandon them to ruin, and as signally distinguish them in his vengeance, as he had signally distinguished them in his favours. And if these things were done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? Indeed in every state the same conduct of providence is to be remarked. *Assyria, Persia, Greece*, will assure us of this truth: But, among many, to insist on one only; under the consular government, so renowned for probity, discipline and severity of manners, how revered was the state, how extensive the power, and illustrious was the *Roman* Name. Yet when at length thro' ease and affluence under the emperors, these very people were softened and debauched into effeminacy, dissoluteness and immorality, how quickly did they sink in their authority and honour; their vast acquisitions in the east and western worlds fell fast and successively away; and there remain to us nothing but the monuments of their grandeur, and the ruins of *Rome*.

But

But to detain you no longer —

On private virtue, my Brethren, depends, you see, the public welfare. As therefore we profess to *seek the good of all, both publick and private*; let us take care to use those means, which will be productive of that end, and seek it in the way of righteousness. In the pleasing prospect of which, and the full hopes that this generous flame will spread itself around and warm the nation;

I see, methinks, the days return, wherein no vitiated sickly taste shall estrange us to our country, and expose, enervate and impoverish this people; wherein luxury and vanity are no more; and the long inglorious train of expensive superfluities, and trifling amusements, banished these kingdoms. I see the people generous, brave, uncorrupted; honesty rewarded, industry encouraged, commerce flourishing; and modesty, and fortitude, and sincerity once more becoming the characteristick of an ENGLISHMAN. *Amen!*



F I N I S.

